What is claimed is:

1. A method of communicating between users, the method comprising:

contracting with an owner of an image for use of said image in a computer;

5 said computer displaying the image to a first user to represent a second user communicating with the first user; and

said computer transferring a message between said first user and said second user.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

10 said owner using the image to identify a source of a product or service and to distinguish said source from other sources;

3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

registering said image with an agency of government as a trade mark, service

15 mark, or trade name of said owner.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said image is formed by a plurality of elements that together define a trade dress of a product or service of said owner.

20 5. The method of claim 1, wherein said image is a mascot of said owner.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said owner owns a copyright in said image.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein said image is a character.

25

8. The method of claim 6 further comprising:

the owner being a source of dolls of said image.

9.   The method of claim 1 further comprising:

displaying another image, hereinafter "background," emulating a physical environment.

10.   The method of claim 9, wherein said background comprises a plurality of tiles.

11.   The method of claim 10 wherein at least one tile in said plurality has different images and colors from another tile in said plurality.

12.   The method of claim 10 wherein at least a group of tiles in said plurality are identical.

13.   The method of claim 9, wherein said background is static relative to a screen of the computer.

14.   The method of claim 9, wherein at least a part of said background moves relative to a screen of the computer.

15.   The method of claim 9 further comprising:

using at least a part of the background to identify a product or service of said owner.

16.   The method of claim 9, wherein at least a part of said background is used for advertising.

17.   The method of claim 9, wherein at least a part of said background includes a trade name, trade mark, trade dress, or service mark of an organization other than said owner.

18.   The method of claim 9, wherein at least a portion of said background has an appearance of at least one room.

19.   The method of claim 9 further comprising changing said background in response to

5   movement of at least a portion of said image.

20.   The method of claim 1, wherein said computer is hereinafter "first computer" and said image is hereinafter "second image", the method further comprising:

displaying a first image to represent said first user, wherein said first image does not

10   identify a source of a product or service; and

moving at least a portion of said first image in response to operation of a portion of said first computer by said first user; and

moving at least a portion of said second image in response to operation of a portion of a second computer by said second user.

15

21.   The method of claim 20 further comprising:

displaying a list indicating a plurality of first images including said first image, wherein each first image does not identify a source of a product or service; and

receiving from the first user an identity of said first image;

20   wherein said displaying of first image to represent said first user is performed subsequent to said receiving.

22.   The method of claim 20 further comprising:

receiving from the first user an identity of an emotion; and

25   replacing the first image with a modified version of said first image to express said emotion.

23.   The method of claim 22 wherein said emotion is hereinafter "first emotion," and the method further comprises:

receiving from the second user an identity of a second emotion; and

replacing the second image with a modified version of said second image to express said second emotion;

wherein said second emotion is one of a second plurality of emotions and said first emotion is one of a first plurality emotions, said second plurality being a subset of said first plurality.

24.   The method of claim 20 further comprising:

receiving from the first user an identity of an interaction to be performed with the second user; and

replacing at least one of the first image and the second image with a modified version thereof, to perform said physical interaction.

25.   The method of claim 24 wherein said interaction is punching.

26.   The method of claim 20 further comprising said second user using said second image in singing, dancing, telling jokes, or being a magician.

27.   The method of claim 20 further comprising:

displaying a third image, hereinafter "object," and

automatically moving said object in response to movement of at least one of said first image and said second image.

28.   The method of claim 20 further comprising:

said second user overriding said first user's manipulation of said first image at least part of the time.

29. The method of claim 20 further comprising:

receiving from the first user an instruction to morph; and

replacing the first image with a morphed version of said first image.

30. The method of claim 1, wherein the message includes a voice recording of one of the first user and the second user.

31. The method of claim 1, wherein said message includes text and the method further comprises:

displaying said text in a first location during receipt of said text, and displaying said text at a second location thereafter.

32. The method of claim 1, wherein said displaying is performed by a first computer operated by the first user, the method further comprising:

a server computer receiving the message over a network; and

the server computer transmitting the message to a plurality of computers including the first computer and a second computer operated by the second user.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the message is hereinafter "first message" and said server computer supports confidential communication between said first user and said second user, and the method further comprising:

said first user transmitting a second message to said second user via said confidential communication, wherein said second message includes information related to purchase of said product or service;

wherein, during the confidential communication, the server computer transfers the second message to the second user but not to any other users.

34. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

the first user accessing a website of said organization; and

downloading said image from said website.

5   35. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

the first user inserting a computer-readable storage medium into a first computer that displays the image; and

the first computer reading said image from said storage medium.

10   36. The method of claim 1 wherein said message pertains to customer service or customer survey for said organization.

37. The method of claim 1, wherein said organization is a business and said message includes an offer to sell or an advertisement for said product or service.

15

38. The method of claim 1, wherein said organization is a church or a religious institution and said message includes a preaching.

39. The method of claim 1, wherein said organization is an educational institution and

20   said message includes a teaching.

40. The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of employees of said organization work in shifts twenty-four hours a day as said second user, to respond to messages from a plurality of first users including said first user.

25

41. The method of claim 1, wherein said image is hereinafter "second image", the method further comprising:

displaying a first image to represent said first user, wherein said first image identifies said source; and

moving at least a portion of said first image in response to operation of a portion of a first computer by said first user; and

5   moving at least a portion of said second image in response to operation of a portion of a second computer by said second user;

wherein said first computer and said second computer are included in said system of computers.

10   42.   The method of claim 1 further comprising:

displaying a list indicating a plurality of images including said first image and said second image, wherein each image identifies said owner;

receiving from the first user an identity of said first image; and

receiving from the second user an identity of said second image;

15   wherein said displaying of images to represent said users is performed subsequent to said receivings.

43.   The method of Claim 42 further comprising:

checking if each of said first user and said second user has purchased said product or
20   service; and

performing said receiving only after said checking.

44.   The method of Claim 43 wherein said checking includes:

prompting each user for a password.

25

45.   A signal encoded in a carrier medium and including instructions to perform the displaying and transferring of claim 1.

46.   A computer readable storage medium encoded with instructions to perform the displaying and transferring of claim 1.

5   47.   A computer system comprising:

a communication network; and

a plurality of computers interconnected by the communication network, each computer having installed therein graphic chatroom software, wherein each computer displays a plurality of images, each image representing a user, at least one image being
10   owned by an organization and used under contract with said organization.

48.   The system of claim 47 wherein said image was previously used by said organization to identify itself or to identify a product or service offered by said organization.

15   49.   The system of claim 48, wherein said second image comprises a trade mark, trade dress, a trade name or service mark of said organization.

50.   The system of claim 48, wherein said organization holds a copyright in said image.

20   51.   The system of claim 47 further comprising a text message displayed by each computer and pertaining to marketing, business transaction, or customer service for the organization.

52.   A method for users to interact with each other, the method comprising:

25   an organization using a plurality of images to identify products or services of said organization, each image being owned by said organization

a plurality of users contracting with the organization for use of said plurality of images;

a computer operated by each user displaying said plurality of images with each image representing one of said users; and

transferring at least one message between said users.

5 53. The method of Claim 52 further comprising:

the organization selling a product to each user prior to said contracting.

54. The method of Claim 53 further comprising:

checking if each user has purchased a product of said organization; and

10 performing said displaying only after said checking.

55. The method of Claim 54 wherein:

each of said images is of a corresponding plurality of products of said organization; and

15 one of said images represents a user only if said user has purchased said corresponding product.

56. The method of Claim 54 wherein said checking includes:

prompting for a password imprinted on packaging of said product.

20

57. The method of Claim 54 wherein:

said product is a doll.

58. The method of Claim 52 further comprising:

25 the organization selling a product to at least one user subsequent to said transferring.

59.   The method of Claim 52 further comprising:

displaying a list of images to each user for selection of an image to represent said user, said plurality of images forming at least a majority of images described by said list.

5   60.   The method of Claim 53 wherein:

said list consists of descriptions of only said plurality of images.

61.   The method of Claim 52 further comprising:

each computer displaying a background image having a theme in common
10   with said plurality of images.

62.   A signal encoded in a carrier medium and including instructions to perform the displaying and transferring of claim 52.

15   63.   A computer readable storage medium encoded with instructions to perform the displaying and transferring of claim 52.

64.   A method for users to interact with each other, the method comprising:

all users contracting with an organization for use of a plurality of characters having a
20   common theme, each character being owned by said organization;

a computer operated by each user displaying said plurality of characters with each character representing one of said users; and

transferring at least one message between said users.

25   65.   The method of Claim 64 further comprising:

the organization selling a product to each user prior to said contracting.

66.   The method of Claim 64 further comprising:

checking if each user has purchased a product of said organization; and

performing said displaying only after said checking.

5   67.   The method of Claim 66 wherein:

each of said characters is used with a corresponding plurality of products of said organization; and

one of said characters represents a user only if said user has purchased said corresponding product.

10

68.   The method of Claim 66 wherein said checking includes:

prompting for a password imprinted on packaging of said product.

69.   The method of Claim 66 wherein:

15   said product is a doll.

70.   The method of Claim 64 further comprising:

the organization selling a product to at least one user subsequent to said transferring.

20   71.   A method of communicating between users, the method comprising:

receiving a plurality of tiles;

repeatedly using at least one tile in said plurality to display a background;

displaying an image over said background to a first user to represent a second user communicating with the first user; and

25   transferring a message between said first user and said second user.